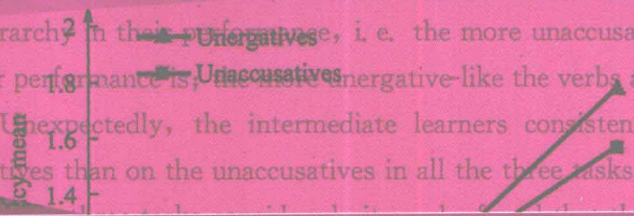


unergatives than with peripheral unergatives. Although statistically insignificant, there is a difference between the core unaccusatives and the peripheral unaccusatives in their performance.

Taken as a whole, the low and the advanced learners are generally conditioned by the Intransitivity Hierarchy in their performance, i.e. the more unaccusative-like the verbs are, the less accurate their performance is; the more unergative-like the verbs are, the more accurate their performance is. Unexpectedly, the intermediate learners consistently perform better on peripheral unergatives than on the unaccusatives in all the three tasks employed.



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英语非宾格性与非作格性习得研究

The L2 Acquisition of English Unaccusativity and Unergativity

Unaccusatives	Low vs advanced	-0.4918 *
	Intermediate vs advanced	0.2231 *
Unergatives	Low vs advanced	-0.4911 *
	Intermediate vs advanced	-0.7142 *



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SHANGHAI JIAO TONG UNIVERSITY PRESS

...further revealed that the difference between each of the two groups was significant with the unaccusatives, $P=0.000$; between the low and the intermediate groups, $P=0.000$; between the intermediate and the advanced, $P=0.000$; between the low and the advanced, $P=0.000$. It is suggested that the advanced learners perform significantly better than the low and the intermediate groups of the two groups, and the low learners perform almost equally well as the intermediate and the advanced, $P=0.000$; between the low and the advanced, $P=0.000$. It is suggested that the advanced learners perform significantly better than the low and the intermediate group, and the intermediate learners perform significantly better than the low.

当代语言学研究文库

教育部社科研究一般基金项目

河南师范大学学术专著出版基金项目

英语非宾格性与非作格性 习得研究

The L2 Acquisition of English Unaccusativity
and Unergativity

李素枝 著

上海交通大学出版社

内 容 提 要

本书在生成语法框架下考察中国英语学习者对英语不及物动词的习得,旨在发现英语非宾格动词与非作格动词在二语习得者心理语法中的知识表征,二语习得者有关英语非宾格性与非作格性知识的发展模式,以及普遍语法在论元结构习得中的作用。本书对论元结构习得的研究是目前该领域的研究热点之一。

本书可供高等院校语言学专业的研究生、教师和二语习得研究者阅读参考。

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

英语非宾格性与非作格性习得研究:英文/李素枝著.

—上海:上海交通大学出版社,2011

(当代语言学研究文库)

ISBN 978-7-313-07693-9

I. 英... II. 李... III. 英语—动词—研究—英文 IV. H314.2

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2011)第 174164 号

英语非宾格性与非作格性习得研究

李素枝 著

上海交通大学出版社出版发行

(上海市番禺路 951 号 邮政编码 200030)

电话:64071208 出版人:韩建民

上海交大印务有限公司 印刷 全国新华书店经销

开本:787mm×960mm 1/16 印张:12 字数:220 千字

2011 年 12 月第 1 版 2011 年 12 月第 1 次印刷

ISBN 978-7-313-07693-9/H 定价:39.00 元

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List of Abbreviations

ASH	Auxiliary Selection Hierarchy	助动词选择层级
ASR	Argument Structure Representation	论元结构表征
DOR	Direct Object Restriction	直接宾语限制
DSR	D-structure Representation	深层结构表征
EFL	English as a Foreign Language	英语作为外语
ESL	English as a Second Language	英语作为二语
EPP	Extended Projection Principle	扩充投射原则
GB	Government and Binding	管约论
IC	Intransitive Construction	不及物结构
IL	Interlanguage	中介语
LSR	Lexical Semantic Representation	词汇语义表征
L1	First Language	第一语言
L2	Second Language	第二语言
PPC	Pseudo-passive Construction	假被动结构
RC	Resultative Construction	结果结构
RG	Relational Grammar	关系语法
SIH	Split Intransitivity Hierarchy	不及物动词分类层级
SLA	Second Language Acquisition	二语习得
SPC	Short Passive Construction	短被动结构
SSR	S-structure Representation	浅层结构表征
TIC	There-insertion Construction	存在结构
UG	Universal Grammar	普遍语法
UH	Unaccusative Hypothesis	非宾格假说
UTAH	Uniformity of Theta Assignment Hypothesis	题元指派的一致性假说
UTH	Unaccusative Trap Hypothesis	非宾格陷阱假说

前言

本书在生成语法框架下考察中国英语学习者对英语不及物动词的习得,旨在发现英语非宾格动词与非作格动词在二语习得者的心理语法中是否具有不同的表征,二语习得者有关它们的知识是如何发展的,以及普遍语法在论元结构习得中是否起作用。以前对两类不及物动词的研究往往局限于被动泛化现象,而忽视了对不及物结构句法诊断式的研究。本书通过考察学习者对诊断式的习得情况以及被动泛化现象发生的情况综合判断二语习得者在其心理语法中是否区分非宾格动词和非作格动词。另一方面,本书进一步探讨动词的语义因素对学习者句法表征的影响。根据不及物动词分类层级假说,非宾格动词与非作格动词的区分并非泾渭分明,而是一个渐变的连续体。非宾格动词和非作格动词根据语义可以分为核心非宾格动词、周边非宾格动词、核心非作格动词以及周边非作格动词。本书考察这些子类的习得情况,进一步验证不及物动词分类层级在二语习得中的心理现实性。

研究采用横断面研究法,受试包括 170 名处于不同发展阶段的中国英语学习者。根据他们的英语水平分为低、中、高 3 个组。实验工具包括诱导式产出性任务和语法判断任务。前者考察学习者非宾格动词以及非作格动词被动结构的使用情况。语法判断题分为两种:A 考察诊断式的习得情况,B 考察学习者对不及物结构以及被动结构的接受情况。本书的主要发现可归纳为以下 4 个方面:

(1) 非宾格动词与非作格动词在学习者的心理语法中具有不同的句法表征。尽管非宾格动词与非作格动词在浅层结构中出现在相同的不及物结构中,即主语—动词语序,但学习者明显对含有非宾格动词的被动结构使用更频繁。而且,在非宾格动词诊断式的习得中,学习者似乎意识到只有非宾格动词可用于结果句和存在句中,而非作格动词比非宾格动词更适合用于假被动句中。

(2) 不及物动词子类之间的语义差异对词类习得有一定的影响。学

习者对不及物结构的掌握程度与不及物动词分类层级大致相符。总体而言,核心非作格动词习得的最好,而核心非宾格动词习得的最差。核心非作格动词的习得好于周边非作格动词,而周边非宾格动词的习得好于核心非宾格动词。一个意外的发现是,低水平学习者对非作格动词的习得并不比非宾格动词好。这一发现恰好说明在研究不及物动词的习得时对其进行语义细分是必要的。

(3) 学习者的心理语法中关于不及物动词分类的知识随着英语水平的提高而增长。研究发现,所有学习者在习得不及物动词时都对非宾格动词和非作格动词作出区分,而且英语水平越高,区分程度也越显著。研究结果与“非宾格陷阱假设”相悖。该假设认为初级水平英语学习者对非宾格动词与非作格动词不作区分。

在习得不及物结构时,不同类型动词的习得路径也不尽相同。非宾格动词的习得呈线性上升发展态势,即非宾格动词的习得与学习者的英语水平紧密相关。而对于非作格动词,学习者呈现的是犁形发展路径,即学习者从初级阶段到中级阶段的发展不明显,高级阶段的学习者对非作格动词的掌握明显提高。而且,核心动词与周边动词的习得路径也有差异。核心非宾格动词大致上呈线性上升发展模式,周边非宾格动词与周边非作格动词呈现大致相同的犁形发展路径,而核心非作格动词的发展呈一条水平线,因为学习者在初级阶段对核心非作格动词的习得已经很好。

(4) 普遍语法在英语不及物动词习得过程中起了重要的作用。非宾格动词与非作格动词的区分是一种跨语言的普遍现象,与“语义角色分配一致性假说”这一普遍原则相符。同时,目标语输入以及学习者的母语对不及物动词习得也有一定的影响。研究进一步表明,可能有多种因素造成不及物动词的被动泛化错误,而且不同发展阶段的学习者使用被动式的内在动因也不完全相同。

研究表明,语言产出涉及从深层到浅层多重水平层次,为普遍语法在二语的论元结构习得中的作用提供了更多的证据。研究结果在很大程度上证明了“非宾格假说”以及“不及物动词分类层级”在二语习得中的心理现实性。本书研究结果进一步揭示了中介语的本质,丰富了二语习得理论,对前人的研究是有益的补充。研究结果对英语教学也有一定

的参考价值。

本书在笔者博士论文的基础上修改而成,也是教育部人文社会科学研究项目(编号:09YJA740037)的研究成果。

本书的完成离不开许多人的关心和帮助。首先要特别感谢我的导师陈永捷教授。陈老师温和谦逊,学风严谨,他的悉心指导,热情鼓励以及宽厚待人的师德使我能克服重重困难,顺利完成了研究和写作任务。

在我读博士以及修改书稿期间,还得到了许多知名学者的无私帮助。感谢上海交通大学的俞理明教授、周国强教授、卫乃兴教授、王同顺教授,北京航空航天大学向明友教授,华东师范大学的张春柏教授,复旦大学的曲卫国教授,上海师范大学的蔡龙权教授等对课题研究及本书写作提出的宝贵意见。

感谢常辉博士、王奇博士对本书选题提出的建设性意见,感谢他们在材料收集以及数据统计方面所给予的无私帮助。感谢孙海燕博士、韩建侠博士、宋姝贤博士、赵勇博士、陈运香博士、王丽博士、吴瑾博士等同学的热情鼓励,感谢他们在我写作低落和彷徨的时候所给与的理解和勇气。感谢参与实验的河南师范大学的诸位老师和同学们,特别感谢好友赵文静、张文莉、周桂芝、娄宝翠、胡海珠等在我所进行的实验中提供的热心帮助。

最后,感谢我全家对我的理解和支持。特别感谢我的丈夫和强先生,他的爱和理解是我艰苦写作的动力。他虽工作繁忙,依然任劳任怨,悉心照顾女儿的生活和学习。没有他的付出,这本书就不可能顺利完成。

在研究过程中,参考和借鉴了相关成果和资料,在此一并感谢。

再次感谢帮助过我、支持过我、关心我的所有老师、朋友和家人。

由于时间和水平有限,书中疏漏在所难免。其中舛误,盖由笔者负责。

李素枝

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2011年10月

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Research Background

Chinese learners of English have, more often than not, been noted to produce such ungrammatical structures as in (1):

- (1) a. ^① * With the development of society, all kinds of jobs are constantly occurred.
b. * It was said that Qu Yuan was died from throwing himself to the river.

Obviously, the learners incorrectly apply the passive morphology *be-Ven* to the intransitive verbs like *occur* and *die*. Such sentences are not occasional slips of the tongue (pen) or just restricted to one or two Chinese learners, but generated by many learners in both spoken and written contexts (Yip, 1995). What renders these features particularly challenging is that they defy any direct explanation. The passive forms of these intransitive verbs cannot be found in the target language input, nor do they appear in the learners' first language (L1), thus denying L1 transfer. The question, then, is what are the underlying triggers behind this phenomenon? Is it unique to Chinese EFL (English as a Foreign Language)^② learners?

As early as the 1970s, researchers like Burt and Kiparsky (1972) and Richards (1973) have reported such non-target phenomenon, as indicated in (2):

- (2) a. * He was died last year. (Richards, 1973: appendix)
b. * One day it was happened. (Richards, 1973: appendix)

① “*” is put at the beginning of a sentence to indicate that the sentence is not grammatical.

② The term “foreign language acquisition” is traditionally distinguished from the term “second language acquisition” in the literature, with the former referring to the acquisition of a L2 in a non-native environment, and the latter referring to the acquisition of a L2 in a native environment. In this book, however, the concepts of “second language” and “foreign language” are not specifically distinguished. The term “second language” is meant to include foreign language unless intentionally specified.

c. * He was arrived early.

(Burt and Kiparsky, 1972:47)

The researchers find that these errors are common to L2 English learners of different L1 backgrounds like Japanese, Chinese, French and Polish. This type of error is interpreted by the early researchers as misapplication of passivization to the general intransitive verb class (also called overpassivization error), which cannot be passivized because they lack an object.

Subsequently, however, some researchers (e.g. Hubbard, 1994; Yip, 1995; Zobl, 1989) claimed that the majority of these errors are confined to a particular subclass of English intransitive verbs identified by the Unaccusative Hypothesis (UH) as unaccusative verbs. According to the UH, the seemingly uniform intransitive verbs can be further divided into two subclasses; unaccusative verbs and unergative verbs, which bear different semantic and syntactic representations (Dowty, 1991; Levin and Rappaport, 1995; Perlmutter, 1978; Van Valin, 1990). The unaccusative-unergative distinction is also called split intransitivity or unaccusativity. Questions arise as to why overpassivization of intransitive verbs mainly occurs to the unaccusative verbs. Are the unaccusative verbs represented differently from the unergative verbs in L2 learners' mental grammars? Does the fact that the overpassivization of the unaccusative verbs is not attributable to L1 transfer or target language input imply that Universal Grammar(UG) plays a part, thus suggesting UG access?

The research into the mental representation of the two kinds of intransitive verbs, namely unaccusatives and unergatives, is to investigate the acquisition of argument structure, which is the consequence of the shift of research focuses within the framework of generative grammar. Until the early 1990s, the majority of SLA research from the generative approach had concentrated on syntax. Around the mid-1990s, its focus has shifted to the interface between syntax and morphology as well as between syntax and semantics. The former is concerned with the acquisition of morphosyntactic features and the latter centers on the acquisition of argument structure. The past few years have witnessed an increased interest among L2 researchers in the acquisition of argument structure (White, 2003). The studies cover many different aspects like dative alternation (e.g. Bley-Vroman and Yoshinaga, 1992; Hawkins, 1987; Inagaki, 1997; Montrul, 1998; Whong Barr and Schwartz, 2002), causative/inchoative alternation (e.g. Montrul, 1997, 1999, 2000, 2001a, 2001b; Moore, 1993), psych verbs (e.g.

Chen, 1996; White, 1995; White, *et al.*, 1999) and locative alternation (e. g. Joo, 2003; Juffs, 1996). In recent years, the study of L2 unaccusativity has attracted great interest from many researchers in the domain of L2 acquisition (e. g. Balcom, 1997; Cai, 1998; Can, 2000; Hirakawa, 1995, 2001, 2006a, b; Montrul, 2004, 2005; Oshita, 1997, 2001; Yip, 1994; 1995). These studies involve English as well as other languages. Most of the research on L2 English unaccusativity has focused on the incorrect use of passive morphology *be - Ven* and the results are far from consistent.

Two hypotheses have been proposed to account for the overpassivization of the unaccusative verbs. One is the Unaccusative Trap Hypothesis (UTH) (Oshita, 1997, 2001), which divides the acquisition of intransitivity into three developmental stages. The other is the Split Intransitivity Hierarchy (SIH) (Sorace, 2000), which posits that unaccusatives and unergatives can be further divided into finer semantic subclasses based on the semantic properties like telicity, agentivity and control. Unfortunately, the majority of the previous studies on L2 English intransitivity have concentrated on the phenomenon of overpassivization. Little research has been carried out to examine how split intransitivity is represented in the interlanguage (IL) of L2 learners. Thus, it is necessary to scrutinize whether L2 learners are aware of the distinction between the unaccusative and the unergative verbs, and their compatibility and incompatibility with the unaccusative diagnostics. The present study attempts to tap Chinese EFL learners' knowledge of split intransitivity with finer classification by investigating their sensitivity to the unaccusative diagnostics as well as the passivization phenomenon, and to explore the developmental pattern of the knowledge in this respect.

1.2 Research Objectives and Research Questions

As SLA theories need to explain both the representational problem (what L2 learners come to know) and the developmental problem (how they attain this knowledge) (e. g. Carroll, 1996; Culicover and Nowak, 2003; Felix, 1987; Gass and Selinker, 1994; Gregg, 1996), the present study is intended to investigate L2 learners' knowledge of split intransitivity and how the knowledge develops over time. More specifically, it explores how the English unaccusative-unergative

distinction is represented in Chinese EFL learners' mental grammars, with an aim to achieve a better understanding of the nature of IL grammar.

To achieve the goals, four aspects are explored in the present study. Firstly, we probe into the question of whether learners differentiate between unaccusatives and unergatives. We scrutinize whether they generate and accept the passivized errors with the unaccusative verbs more frequently than those with the unergative verbs, and whether they identify the compatibility or incompatibility of the unaccusative diagnostics with the unaccusatives and the unergatives. The results can shed light on how the knowledge of split intransitivity is represented in Chinese learners' English grammars.

Secondly, the present study also investigates whether learners are sensitive to the semantic elements that determine the further classification of the unaccusatives and the unergatives into the core and the peripheral. The results can serve as SLA evidence to confirm or disconfirm the psychological reality of the Split Intransitivity Hierarchy.

Thirdly, the developmental pattern is traced through a cross-sectional study. Three groups of subjects at different proficiency levels are tested to examine the effect of target language proficiency on the representation of L2 intransitivity, and to find out how the knowledge of unaccusativity and unergativity evolves over time. The validity of the Unaccusative Trap Hypothesis is tested as well.

Finally, the underlying mechanisms of the unaccusative/unergative distinction and the overpassivization of unaccusatives will be explored. Is it the consequence of their distinct syntactic-semantic features, target input, L1 transfer or the accessible UG features?

In a nutshell, the present study mainly answers the following four research questions:

- Research question 1

Are English unaccusative verbs represented differently from the unergative verbs in Chinese EFL learners' grammars?

- Research question 2

Are Chinese EFL learners sensitive to the semantic features that divide intransitive verbs into the core and the peripheral unaccusatives and unergatives?

- Research question 3

How does Chinese EFL learners' knowledge of split intransitivity develop

over time?

- Research question 4

Does UG operate in the acquisition of English split intransitivity?

1.3 Significance of the Study

The present study investigates Chinese learners' knowledge of English intransitivity from a generative perspective. The study is of great theoretical and pedagogical significance.

Theoretically, the exploration of L2 syntactic and semantic knowledge of English intransitive verbs will shed light on the current research into argument structure representations. It will also provide more evidence and new insight for the acquisition of L2 lexicon. Most research conducted by applied linguists simply treats the lexicon as synonymous with word list. Most research, therefore, deals with L2 learners' knowledge of word meaning and collocation, or ability to remember words (e. g. Carter and McCarthy, 1988; McCarthy, 1992; Singleton and Little, 1991). Such studies are by no means less important, but they are only part of the story for the whole picture of SLA lexicon.

More importantly, the study of how split intransitivity is represented in L2 learners' knowledge can provide further evidence for the role of UG in SLA. L2 learners also face the logical problem in their acquisition of English unaccusative-unergative distinction. The target language input does not supply clear evidence for the distinction between English unaccusative and unergative verbs. The intransitive sentences appear to be identical at the surface level, for both the unaccusative and the unergative sentences take the subject-verb order. The difference can be found only at a D-structure level, which the learners do not observe directly. In addition, the unaccusative-unergative distinction is not spelt out explicitly in classrooms, rarely is it presented in English textbooks. On the other hand, such distinction may not be evidently found in learners' L1. Therefore, to explore the knowledge of intransitivity is a way to test whether UG is involved in the L2 acquisition of argument structure.

Furthermore, although Chinese learners' IL grammar of English bears its own features, it may have certain properties that are common to all ILs at a more abstract level. Hence, the study of Chinese learners' IL knowledge of split

intransitivity may help to achieve a better understanding of the nature of IL grammar in general.

The present study does not directly address pedagogical problems such as grammatical correction and instruction. However, it is evident that an understanding of the problems that learners face in the acquisition of English intransitive verbs is an invaluable aid in forming ideas about teaching them. For example, the study results may show which subtypes of intransitive verbs are more likely to get incorrectly passivized than others, so that the language teachers will give special attention to those verbs in grammar classes. In addition, the information can also be conducive for the compilers of English grammar books, especially those for pedagogical purposes. To the knowledge of the present researcher, few English grammar books in China as well as in other English-speaking countries touch upon issues about the different properties that characterize the unaccusative and the unergative verbs, not to mention the core and the peripheral verbs. Once different degrees of difficulty can be diagnosed concerning different verb types, the information can be included in the grammar books, which is believed to be illuminating to L2 learners of English.

1.4 Organization of the Book

The book is composed of seven chapters. Chapter 1 serves as a brief introduction to the research background, objectives and its significance.

Chapter 2 presents the theoretical foundation underlying the present study, including the Unaccusative Hypothesis, the Split Intransitivity Hierarchy and the cross-linguistic evidence for the split intransitivity. The unaccusative diagnostics in English and Chinese are also discussed.

In Chapter 3, the previous studies on the acquisition of L2 English intransitivity are reviewed, and the unsolved problems are pointed out.

Chapter 4 describes the research methodology, including the research hypotheses, subjects, tasks and procedures for data collection and analysis.

Chapter 5 reports the findings of the present study in terms of the research hypotheses addressed.

In Chapter 6, results are discussed with respect to the research questions and to the empirical findings obtained in the previous studies.

Finally, in Chapter 7, the major conclusions are summarized, and the implications, both theoretical and empirical, are elaborated. Limitations of the present study are also listed, and suggestions for future research are provided.

Chapter 2 Theoretical Analysis of the Split Intransitivity

2.0 Introduction

Since the Unaccusative Hypothesis (UH) was first proposed by Perlmutter (1978), the distinction between the two classes of traditional intransitive verbs, i.e., unaccusatives and unergatives, has been generally acknowledged to be a universal phenomenon existing across languages, though the morphological and syntactic representations are different cross-linguistically (Burzio, 1986; Leven and Rappaport, 1995; Van Hout, Randall and Weissenborn, 1992; Zaenen, 1993). The study of unaccusativity has attracted attention from many researchers in the linguistic field (e.g. Alexiadou, Anagnostopoulou and Everaert, 2004; Belletti and Rizzi, 1981; Bresnan and Zaenen, 1990; Dixon, 1994; Grewendorf, 1989; Kishimoto, 1996; Legendre, 1989; Perlmutter and Postal, 1984; Sorace and Shomura, 2001; Tsujimura, 1990). A lot of morphosyntactic evidence has been collected cross-linguistically to support the unaccusative-unergative distinction. Moreover, unaccusative verbs and unergative verbs are further divided according to their semantic and aspectual properties. These issues will be reviewed and discussed in this chapter.

The organization of the chapter is as follows. In Section 2.1, the basic tenets of UH within the framework of Relational Grammar (RG) and the Government and Binding (GB) theory are elaborated, and the cross-linguistic evidence for the unaccusative-unergative distinction is provided. Section 2.2 deals with further classifications of unaccusative and unergative verbs, the focus being the Split Intransitivity Hierarchy (SIH). The final section discusses the properties of split intransitivity in English and Chinese, involving the deep *versus* surface unaccusativity, unaccusative transitive/inchoative alternation and the diagnostics for English and Chinese unaccusativity.